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STATE FOR NEA/MAG AND INR/B

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2019
TAGS: PREL PINR PGOV MO
SUBJECT: EMBASSY CONTACTS PROSPER AT MOROCCAN MFA

Classified By: CDA Robert P. Jackson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: After more than one and a half years of waiting since current minister Fassi Fihri became Morocco's chief diplomat, there have been major staff changes at the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MFA), reaching the highest levels of career diplomats. Close Embassy contacts have fared well, as have younger diplomats, English speakers and women. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) MFA Secretary General Youssef Amrani and Chief of Staff Bourita confirmed to PolCouns April 2, some of the changes, implemented last week and before, restructuring the MFA. Amrani, who has been in place since November 2008 as senior civil servant and effective Number Two at the Ministry will retain responsibility as the senior point of contact with the U.S. and Europe. (Note: He hosted the preparatory meeting for the Forum for the Future and will remain in charge of that effort. End Note.) He has gained responsibility for personnel and management issues, particularly launching a new diplomatic academy, for which the MFA had acquired a building adjacent to its headquarters.

Former Ambassador to Turkey Mohammed Abdellah Zagour has been brought back to take Amrani's old job as Director General for Bilateral Affairs.

¶3. (SBU) Amrani said former fellow Director General Mohammed Azeroual will remain in charge of Arab and Islamic relations but will hold the title of Inspector General, making him effective number three at the MFA. Current Chief of Staff Nasser Bourita has been given ambassadorial rank and will take on the added responsibilities of being Director General for Multilateral Affairs. As he had never relinquished his International Organizations Directorate hat, his new rank has given him additional oversight of Multilateral Economic Affairs, while his Directorate title goes to long-time acting and Deputy Azzedine Farhane, who has been our point person on nonproliferation issues. Bourita will remain Chief of Staff and retain his office next to his Minister, along with his role as manager of the Western Sahara and human rights portfolios.

¶4. (SBU) There are a number of other new Directors, including both European and Multilateral Arab Affairs (ex-Washington PolCouns Mohammed Arrouchi). Fouad Yazourgh, the Acting Director of the Americas Division (Directorate des Affaires Americaines) is now the official Director. His Chief for North America, Wassane Zailachi, a valued contact, departs May 1 to become DCM in Washington.

¶5. (C) It was also announced that current Africa Director Abdelatif Bendahane was reconfirmed in his position, possibly an offhand way of confirming his full stewardship of relations with the region. (Note: He reports directly to

the Minister, and he claims to report sometimes independently to the Palace, through Director General for Studies and Documentation (DGED), i.e., external intelligence chief, Director General Mohammed Yassine Mansouri. End Note.) Directors are interviewing new potential division chiefs.

¶6. (SBU) The following represents a current list of high ranking MFA officials by position as received via a diplomatic note from the Moroccan MFA as of early April 2009:

-- Mr. Mohamed Azeroual, Ambassador, Inspector General, Responsible for Middle East Issues;

-- Mr. Abdellah Zagour, Ambassador, Director General for Bilateral Relations, Responsible for Bilateral Relations with European Countries;

-- Mr. Nasser Bourita, Ambassador, Director General for Multilateral Relations and Global Cooperation, Chief of Staff of the Minister;

-- Mr. Ali El M'Hamdi, Ambassador, Director of Social and Consular Affairs;

-- Mr. Abdelouahab Bellouki, Ambassador, Chief of Protocol;

-- Mr. Lahcen Azoulay, Ambassador, Director of Judicial and Treaty Affairs;

-- Mr. Badr Eddine Allali, Ambassador, Director of Asian and Oceania Affairs;

-- Mr. Fouad Yazourh, Director of American Affairs;

-- Mr. Nabil Adghoghi, Director of European Affairs, Responsible for the European Union and Euro-Mediterranean Affairs;

-- Mr. Ahmed Tazi, Director of Cultural, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation;

-- Mr. Azzedine Ferhane, Director of United Nations and International Organization Affairs;

-- Ms. Zakia El Midaoui, Director of Multilateral Cooperation;

-- Mr. Karim Medrek, Director of Communications;

-- Mr. Addellilah El Housni, Director of Personnel and Training;

-- Mr. Mohamed Amine Belhaj, Director of Financial Affairs and Equipment;

-- Ms. Nour Al Houda Marakchi, Director of Sectoral Studies and Coordination;

-- Ms. Farida Jaidi, Ambassador, Diplomatic Counselor; and

-- Mr. Abderrahmane Drissi Alami, Ambassador, Diplomatic Counselor.

¶7. (C) Comment: Well-known friends of the Embassy and USG have fared well in these changes. The promotions and some appointments at the staff level also are notable for bringing in younger, often English-speaking diplomats, with an increased profile for women. In addition to bringing in new blood, the changes have also weeded out older, more pan-Arabist and Francophone fossils. While some of the structure is being regularized, actual functions in the Ministry will remain a better guide to an individual's role and influence than formal titles. End Comment.

Jackson